

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 IO-13
HA-05 /096 W

-----033137 021719Z /43

P R 021335Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5977
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE 0300
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 5987

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION: NOVEMBER 25 - DECEMBER 1

REF: BEIRUT 5860 (DTG 251425Z NOV 77)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THIS WEEK, FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS SAID
IT WAS TOO EARLY TO MAKE A CLEAR ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION
IN THE WAKE OF SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM. THE GOL DECIDED
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NOT TO ATTEND THE CAIRO PREPARATORY MEETING OR THE ARAB
CONFERENCE IN LIBYA. THERE WAS AGAIN LITTLE FIGHTING IN
SOUTH LEBANON. THERE WERE ARMED CLASHES BETWEEN PALESTINIANS
IN SABRA REFUGEE CAMP AND BOMBINGS IN BEIRUT ALMOST EVERY
DAY. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, ELEMENTS OF THE
EGYPTIAN-BASED PALESTIAN AYN JALLUT BRIGADE ARRIVED IN
SOUTH LEBANON. PRIME MINISTER AL HOSS WARNED THAT ISRAEL

WOULD SEEK TO COMPETE WITH LEBANON AS A FINANCIAL CENTER IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE CABINET APPROVED A SALARY INCREASE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS. END SUMMARY.

2. FURTHER REACTION TO SADAT'S VISIT.

SPEAKING BEFORE A JOINT SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN RELATIONS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEES ON NOVEMBER 24, FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS SAID THAT PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL HAD "SPLIT THE ARAB WORLD," BUT ADDED THAT IT WAS TOO EARLY TO MAKE A CLEAR ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION. PHALANGE LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL ON NOVEMBER 29 CALLED FOR AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN LEBANON, SAUDI ARABIA, KUWAIT AND JORDAN TO WORK TO PREVENT INTER-ARAB STRUGGLES "FROM TAKING A TRAGIC TURN." NLP LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN SAID THAT LEBANON SHOULD "STAY OUT OF ARAB AXIS POLITICS." THE CONSERVATIVE ISLAMIC GROUPING CALLED FOR ARAB UNITY, "ESPECIALLY BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT." THE LEFTIST INDEPENDENT NASSERISTS AGAIN DENOUNCED SADAT'S VISIT AND THE CAIRO CONFERENCE.

3. LEBANON INVITED TO CAIRO AND TRIPLI.

FOREIGN MINISTER FOUAD BOUTROS TOLD THE PRESS ON NOVEMBER 28 THAT LEBANON HAD RECEIVED OFFICIAL INVITATIONS TO ATTEND BOTH THE CAIRO PREPARATORY MEETING AND THE ARAB CONFERENCE IN LIBYA. ON DECEMBER 1, THE GOL ANNOUNCED IT WOULD NOT SEND A DELEGATION TO CAIRO. IN CONFIDENTIAL

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REPLYING TO THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT, THE GOL "RESERVED THE RIGHT TO REQUEST AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, SHOULD IT BE RECONVENED, AT ANY STAGE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH DEALS WITH MATTERS IN WHICH LEBANESE INTERESTS ARE INVOLVED." THE GOL DID NOT SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE TRIPOLI MEETING THAT OPENED DECEMBER 1.

4. SOUTH LEBANON.

THERE WAS AGAIN LITTLE FIGHTING IN SOUTH LEBANON, ALTHOUGH PALESTINIAN REJECTIONISTS FROM NABATIYEH SHELLED CHRISTIAN POSITIONS IN THE MARJAYUN AREA, ACCORDING TO A USUALLY RELIABLE DATT SOURCE (SEE IR-6-857-0130-77). ON NOVEMBER 24, FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS REMARKED THAT "TECHNICAL PROCEDURES ARE NOW UNDER WAY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREEMENTS IN SOUTH LEBANON." ON NOVEMBER 28, LEBANESE MILITARY OFFICERS AND PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES MET TO WORK OUT DETAILS OF PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL, ACCORDING TO A DATT SOURCE. THE SAME DAY, HOWEVER, INDEPENDENT AN NAHAR CITED "SOURCES CLOSE TO THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE" AS SAYING THE PALESTINIANS WOULD RATHER

RISK MILITARY DEFEAT THAN WITHDRAW FROM SOUTH LEBANON WITHOUT ADEQUATE GUARANTEES.

5. MORE VIOLENCE.

THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE (ADF) REMAINED IN A HIGH ALERT POSTURE IN BEIRUT, AS THERE WERE ARMED CLASHES BETWEEN PALESTINIANS IN SABRA REFUGEE CAMP AND BOMBINGS IN BEIRUT ALMOST EVERY DAY. THE PRESIDENT OF THE MILITARY COURT, COLONEL NABIL KORAYTIM REMARKED THAT, AFTER STUDYING NUMEROUS TRIAL CASES, HE BELIEVED THE BOMBINGS IN CHRISTIAN EAST BEIRUT WERE PRIMARILY ACTS OF EXTORTION AND PERSONAL VENDETTAS, WHILE THOSE IN MUSLIM WEST BEIRUT WERE MOSTLY FOR POLITICAL REASONS.

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6. REPORTED ARRIVAL OF AYN JALLUT BRIGADE ELEMENTS.

ACCORDING TO ONE USUALLY RELIABLE DATT SOURCE, ELEMENTS OF THE EGYPTIAN-BASED AYN JALLUT BRIGADE LANDED AT TYRE ON NOVEMBER 27. (ACCORDING TO OTHER SOURCES, ELEMENTS OF THE BRIGADE HAVE BEEN LEAVING EGYPT FOR SOUTH LEBANON OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS). THE ARAB DEFENSE FORCES (ADF) ON NOVEMBER 28 ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE DENYING A LOCAL RADIO REPORT THAT TWO SHIPS CARRYING TROOPS OF THE BRIGADE HAD ARRIVED IN SIDON. THE COMMUNIQUE SAID THE ADF HAD SEARCHED THE SHIPS IN QUESTION, WHICH WERE CARRYING PILGRIMS COMING BACK FROM SAUDI ARABIA. CAMILLE CHAMOUN SAID PRIVATELY THAT 300 PALESTINIANS EXPELLED FROM EGYPT HAD ARRIVED IN LEBANON. HE FEARED 2000 PALESTINIAN STUDENTS IN EGYPT WOULD BE NEXT.

7. HOSS ADDRESSES DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE.

ADDRESSING A CONFERENCE ON DEVELOPMENT IN LEBANON ON NOVEMBER 29, PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL HOSS CLAIMED THAT ISRAEL'S NEW ECONOMIC POLICIES WERE "THE FIRST CONCRETE SIGN OF ISRAELI EXPECTATION OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST." HE WARNED THAT ISRAEL WAS SEEKING TO MODEL ITS ECONOMY ON LEBANON AND TO COMPETE WITH LEBANON AS A FINANCIAL CENTER IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HOSS ALSO STATED THAT LEBANON HAD SUFFERED SUCH GREAT LOSSES THAT IT NEEDED SUBSTANTIAL EXTERNAL AID TO RETURN TO ECONOMIC NORMALITY QUICKLY.

8. CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES INCREASED.

ON NOVEMBER 30 THE CABINET DECIDED TO RAISE THE MINIMUM SALARY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO LL 415 PER MONTH, AND TO GRANT A COST OF LIVING INCREASE TO ALL CIVIL SERVANTS TO KEEP PACE WITH SALARY INCREASES GRANTED

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THE PRIVATE SECTOR ON OCTOBER 19 (SEE OCTOBER 20 SITREP).
THE INCREASES FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR WILL TAKE EFFECT ON
JANUARY 1, 1978.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BEIRUT05987
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770447-1101
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197712102/aaaadiky.tel
Line Count: 179
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BEIRUT 5860
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 107775
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION: NOVEMBER 25 - DECEMBER 1
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/38e0cefb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009